

# Community Training and Assistance Center and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Leadership for Educator's Advanced Performance



Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) is a large, diverse, metropolitan school district—22nd largest in the country—serving more than 133,000 students pre-kindergarten through 12th grade with 9,363 full-time teachers. The district serves a diverse population of students in its 176 schools. Almost 70 percent of CMS' schools have been identified as high need, and 65 percent are struggling to reach academic targets for adequate yearly progress (AYP). These challenges motivated CMS to implement the Leadership for Educator's Advanced Performance (LEAP) initiative to create an alternative compensation system that links teachers' and principals' earnings to student achievement. The LEAP initiative will focus on instructional improvements, with recruitment and retention support for teachers in hard-to-staff subjects in high-need schools coupled with financial incentives for teachers and principals to have the maximum positive impact on student achievement.

## Needs Assessment Results and General Information

The CMS student population—41 percent black, 34 percent white, 16 percent Hispanic, 5 percent Asian, and 4 percent Native American/multiracial—is divided among 176 schools; 110 of these schools are identified as high need. Free or reduced-price lunch rates at these high-need schools ranged from 30 to 99 percent in 2005-06. Teacher turnover averages 14 to 18 percent.

In total, 20 high-need schools are participating in LEAP. Six of the district's neediest schools were targeted in year 1: two elementary schools and four middle schools. These first six schools are part of the district's Achievement Zone, which is made up of 10 schools with the highest needs and lowest performance that have been identified as low performing or priority schools by the state. The remaining four Achievement Zone schools were added in year 2: three elementary schools and one middle school.

This year, the number of participating schools doubled with the addition two more elementary schools and eight high schools. By year 5, nearly 14,000 students and 1,300 teachers and principals will be involved.

All participating schools failed to meet their No Child Left Behind AYP targets for 2005-06, and the four participating high schools failed to meet the 60 percent passing threshold for the North Carolina End-of-Course Assessments. Teacher and principal turnover is worse at the targeted schools than is the state average. Teacher turnover was as high as 24 percent, and 75 percent of principals have fewer than 3 years of experience.

## Background

The LEAP initiative has four specific goals: (1) create a differentiated compensation model for teachers and principals that is based on increased student achievement and multiple classroom observations

<b>Location(s)</b>	Charlotte, North Carolina
<b>Award Date</b>	June 2007
<b>Duration</b>	5 years
<b>Partners</b>	Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Community Training and Assistance Center

and other evaluations, (2) improve and support recruitment and retention efforts in hard-to-staff schools and subject areas, (3) align school support systems to build teacher and principal capacity for increasing student achievement, and (4) develop district capabilities to sustain and grow the performance-based compensation system.

CMS has already implemented some alternative compensation models, including school-based and classroom-based performance pay, signing bonuses, master teacher bonuses, and administrator merit pay. From these experiences, CMS has built a performance-based incentive system that uses the most successful features from previous programs coupled with the expertise and guidance of the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) to create a comprehensive compensation system that results in higher student achievement and school performance.

### **Incentives**

Eligible teachers and principals can earn a merit-based salary supplement annually for reaching student academic achievement and growth goals. They can also earn a bonus or stipend for attending professional development or assuming additional leadership responsibilities.

Financial incentives include a \$10,000 signing bonus for teachers and principals who accept positions in hard-to-staff, high-need schools; \$8,000 signing bonuses for teachers who agree to teach hard-to-staff subjects; and incentive stipend pay of \$115/day, including benefits for attending approved professional development or assuming leadership roles and extra duties that are related to improving student achievement.

### **Evaluation**

Stipends will be based on the successful attainment of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and student achievement growth measures. SLOs are created by individual teachers, with the approval of site-based administrators, and the support of the Curriculum

and Instruction Department. Student attainment of the objectives will be measured by a combination of existing assessment instruments, and teacher-designed tools. In addition, student achievement data will be collected from the North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) tests for grades 3 through 8 and the End-of-Course (EOC) tests for grades 9 through 12.

In addition, eligible administrators and teachers must earn Very Effective ratings on the Principal or Assistant Principal Appraisal Instruments or At Standard or Above ratings on all functions of the TPAI-R (Teacher Performance Appraisal Instrument-Revised), as applicable. The TPAI-R model requires at least three reviews per year on management of instructional time and student behavior; instructional presentation, monitoring, and feedback; facilitating instruction and communication within the education environment; and performing noninstructional duties. CMS also uses the Downey 3-minute Walk-Through Model to monitor and guide teaching practices.

CMS and its partner, CTAC, will implement a revised and relevant professional development strategy for the LEAP Initiative schools that will be evaluated annually. Professional development will focus on the successful implementation of the student learning objective model.

### **Resources**

CMS will reallocate funds from three existing pay-for-performance programs and has committed more than \$8.6 million over the 5-year period. By year 5, 75 percent of the differentiated compensation will be funded with local dollars.

### **Data Systems**

Data management systems for student background and achievement data and for human resources information were recently updated at CMS. Efforts to maximize efficiency and effectiveness are embedded in the initiative.

## Year 2 Activities

Throughout the second year of the TIF-LEAP Initiative, the project partners continued to work closely to ensure project development and the pathway to years 2–5 and to plan for the long-term organizational and financial sustainability of the initiative.

Year 2 implementation concluded on schedule regarding stakeholder engagement and communication, spending, and overall project execution. This is reflected in the successful continuation of activities such as formal monthly meetings of the Steering Committee and ongoing input from the four stakeholder groups: Instructional Support Working Group, Principals Working Group, Student Learning Objective (SLO) Design Team, and Finance/HR Working Group; engagement of key departments within the district, such as Accountability and Assessment, Communications, Curriculum and Instruction, Executive Office, Finance and Budget, Human Resources, and Information Technology; securing of district and community input through widely disseminated surveys and individual and focus group interviews; adoption of research-based SLO pathway for years 2-5; modification of financial models leading to the long-term organizational and financial sustainability of the initiative; and continued implementation of five-year Communication Plan and overall project control plan.

Year 2 Compensation Summary	
Recruitment Bonuses	\$489,808
Professional Development/Leadership Stipends	\$122,784
Merit-Based Supplements	\$820,256
Total	\$1,432,848

The TIF-LEAP partners remain confident in the ultimate success of this initiative.

## Outlook for Year 3

The initiative is moving towards years 3-5 by focusing increasingly on student growth and achievement measured at both the classroom and school levels. Building the capacity of the district to ensure long-term organizational and financial sustainability remains a high priority.

Main challenges in year 3 include executing a district-developed growth measure; providing ongoing instructional support for the successful implementation of teacher-designed, administrator-approved SLOs; refining data management systems for students and teachers; and adjusting assumptions and modeling capacity for projecting long-term financial sustainability.

In addition, CTAC will continue to conduct independent evaluation and assessment activities through surveys, interviews, and the review of student achievement data and teacher profile data.